



News Release

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Planning and Partnering for H1N1

As Flu Season arrives, Lewis County Public Health and community partners prepare

Chehalis, WA – Lewis County Public Health is participating in ongoing efforts to establish collaborative partners within the community as the entire nation prepares for the coming flu season. Current efforts are focused on establishing venues for H1N1 vaccination distribution once it arrives this fall. Public Health has held information and planning meetings with community partners, such as school districts and medical providers. Additionally, Lewis County Public Health Department has preliminary plans for vaccination clinics this fall, and is currently recruiting volunteers to assist them through the Medical Reserve Corps.

Health officials want to ensure that people understand that there is a difference between seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu, and that they require different vaccines.

Seasonal flu happens every year. Anyone who wants to reduce their risk for seasonal flu should get a seasonal influenza vaccine. It is recommended that people get the vaccine as soon as they can. Certain people are highly encouraged to get vaccinated every year.

They are either people who are at high risk of having serious seasonal flu-related complications or people who live with or care for those at high risk for serious seasonal flu-related complications.

H1N1 flu is a new strain of influenza and the vaccine should be available sometime in October. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have established recommendations for the priority populations to receive H1N1 vaccine:

1. Pregnant women

2. Household contacts of children less than 6 months of age
3. Healthcare workers and emergency services personnel
4. Children and young adults from 6 months – 24 years of age
5. Adults aged 25-64 years of age with medical conditions that increase the risk of influenza and complications

It is important to note that the priority groups for seasonal and H1N1 flu are somewhat different. Specifically, persons over the age of 50 are highly recommended to receive seasonal flu vaccination, but are not a priority group for the H1N1 vaccine. This is primarily because the younger populations are more likely to suffer from H1N1 infection. Once the priority groups have been vaccinated, the H1N1 vaccine will be available to everyone who wants it.

The Lewis County Public Health Department has established plans for a Medical Reserve Corps. If you are interested in volunteering to help with public health emergencies, including the coming flu season, visit the Lewis County Public Health website for additional information and an application: www.lewiscountywa.gov/publichealth/MRC. For more information and regular H1N1 updates visit: www.flu.gov.

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